



Elder Abuse & Elderly Protective Services

Q. What is Elder Abuse?

A. Louisiana law R.S. 15:1501-1511 protects people who are **60 or older** from physical or emotional abuse as well as neglect by care givers. The law also protects seniors from self-neglect. The law protects seniors from other people misusing or stealing their money.

Elderly Protective Services (**EPS**), a program administered by the state, investigates suspected abuse. **You can reach EPS by calling 1-800-259-4990.**

EPS does not handle cases of nursing home abuse or of abuse in group homes. Those cases go to the Ombudsman Program at 1-866-632-0922.

Q. What are some signs of elder abuse?

A.

- Physical harm, such as pushing, hitting, or restraining the person;
- Emotional and verbal bullying, such as screaming, threatening, or insulting the person;
- The care giver isolating the person, or the older person becoming isolated to the point of danger;
- Sexual abuse;
- Neglect, such as not providing for medicine, medical care, food, personal care, utilities, or daily needs;
- Over medicating;
- Self-neglect;
- Stealing or misusing money, property, or the possessions of an elderly person.

Q. What is the Elderly Protective Services (EPS) Program?

A. EPS gets its money from the state government. It has regional offices covering the entire state. In some cities, it is run as a state agency. In other areas it's a private agency who signs a contract with the state to do this work. The staff takes reports of possible abuse against older persons and investigates. If the investigation shows

abuse is happening, EPS will act to stop it and prevent future abuse.

In doing this work, EPS sticks to their goal of giving the victim the most personal freedom, dignity, and self-determination they can. The victims are very involved in making decision about what they want done about the abusive situations.

Q. Who should contact Elderly Protective Services (EPS)?

A. EVERYONE - Doctors, dentists, nurses, social workers, counselors, police officers, psychologists, coroners, podiatrists, occupational therapists, osteopaths, probation officers, staff of homemaker and home health agencies, or nursing facilities, financial directors, bank tellers, family members, neighbors, and friends.

The law requires you to make a report to EPS if you have reasonable cause to believe an older person is being abused or neglected by a care giver or by himself/herself (the law recognizes the attorney-client privilege and the minister/priest-penitent privilege as the only exceptions to the rule that everyone has a duty to report abuse of older people).

Q. What should be reported to EPS when an incident occurs?

A. Simply use your eyes and ears. Any unusual signs could mean abuse. These could be burns, bruises, swollen or black eyes, broken bones, dilated pupils, evidence of restraints, bedsores, lack of clothing or dirty clothing, body odor, dehydrated or starved appearance, no utilities in the home, personal property missing, no food or medication, frequent change in doctors, no visitors allowed, the victim saying he or she is afraid or ashamed.

Q. What is I am afraid to call EPS?

A. Okay, so you aren't an expert on what may be abuse. It's easier to do nothing instead of "getting involved". To help make it easier on you to file a report with EPS the

law provides for the following:

- **You can report anonymously.**
- If you act in good faith by reporting what you believe to be abuse or neglect, you cannot be ordered by a court to pay damages, even if no abuse is validated.
- No criminal charges can be brought against you if you acted in good faith.
- All reports are confidential. EPS cannot release the reporter's name without a written release signed by the reporter.
- If you know of abuse and fail to report it, you could be charged with a crime and either fined or jailed.

Q. What happens after a report is made?

A. EPS screens each report, if it does not meet the criteria for services, the case is referred to alternate community services and resources.

EPS staff investigates all other eligible cases of abuse, neglect, and/ or exploitation, intervene when and where appropriate, and prepare a plan of resolution utilizing community resources. EPS program staff sometimes request physical, psychiatric or psychological tests if they think they are needed.

If abuse is taking place, the EPS makes a plan to solve the problem using local resources. This could mean finding someone the victim trusts to help handle money. It could be setting up meals on wheels or homemaker services for the victim. EPS staff sometimes helps the victim move to another home. Other times, they force the abuser to move and stay away from the victim. EPS staff monitors this plan at each step until the situation is stabilized. When staff sees that a case of abuse or neglect calls for it, they may seek court orders, such as those forcing the abuser to return property they've taken from the victim. They may send the case to the local district attorney for civil action or criminal prosecution.

Due to confidentiality, EPS **cannot release confidential information or specific details** obtained during the investigation. However, EPS may provide

reporters with some information.

- EPS may inform the reporter of the current disposition of the case. Such as, if the case is still open or closed.
- EPS is permitted to share the final investigation decision with the reporter(i.e., unable to substantiate, competent client; refused services, etc.).
- The reporter may request a reporter letter. The reporter letter advises reporter that a case has been opened for investigation and gives general information about our process. If a report is not accepted for investigation, the reporter will be notified and provided alternative community services and resources.
- In addition, EPS can also inform agencies or individuals who are or have been involved in the provisions or support to the adult that a case is being closed for protective services.

Q. How can I report abuse or neglect to EPS?

A. Call the toll-free (in-state only) EPS Statewide Hotline at 1-800-259-4990 or, if calling from outside Louisiana, call 1-225-342-9722.

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
ELDERLY PROTECTIVE SERVICES
(225) 342-9722 OR (800) 259-4990

EPS Regional Contact Numbers/ Parishes:

ALEXANDRIA REGION

Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, Winn

Robin Smith

EPS Supervisor

1208 Wisteria Drive

Alexandria, LA 71301

Office: (318) 484-2219

(800) 256-7001

FAX: (318) 484-2236

BATON ROUGE REGION

Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Point Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana

Ebony Phillips

EPS Supervisor

Volunteers of America

Main Office: 2124 Wooddale Boulevard

Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Satellite Office:

29840 South Magnolia Dr.

Livingston, LA 70754

Office: (225) 925-2372 Ext. 279

In-State Toll-Free: (800) 256-4722

FAX: (800) 819-7554

LAFAYETTE REGION

Acadia, Assumption, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Vermilion

Audrey Thibodeaux

EPS Supervisor

Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office

300 Iberia Street, Suite 120

New Iberia, LA 70560-4584

Office: (337) 365-9855

(866) 491-5044

FAX: (337) 475-3510

LAKE CHARLES REGION

Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis

Lynda Michelle Parson

EPS Supervisor

196 Williamsburg

Lake Charles, LA 70605

Office: (337) 475-3500

(888) 491-2619

FAX: (337) 475-3510

MONROE REGION

Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll

Donny Smith

EPS Supervisor

804 North 31st Street, Suite A

Monroe, LA 71201

Office: (318) 362-4280

(800) 954-6902

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NEW ORLEANS REGION

Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, St. Tammany, Washington

Gertrude Estelle

EPS Supervisor

Volunteers of America

320 Old Hammond Hwy, Suite 300

Metairie, LA 70005

Office: (504) 832-1644

(800) 673-4673

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SHREVEPORT REGION

Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Desoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster

Clara Farley

EPS Supervisor

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FAX: (318) 676-5212

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